Newspapers by ancestry
https://www.newspapers.com/image/388980784

Downloaded on Mar 29, 2024

L.A. BEAT

THE ODD VISIONS OF JOHANNA

By JEFF SPURRIER

There's rock 'n' roll and there's art. Hovering somewhere in between is Johanna Went.

A typical Went performance is short by rock standards, maybe 25 minutes, but like an evocative dream, it seems longer. It begins with a random jam by drummer Brock Rock and synthesizer player Mark Wheaton. The musicians play free-form sounds without regard to key, mode or tempo. Sporadic tape-loops add to the din.

With the no-wave sounds echoing behind her, Went takes the microphone and spews out a word salad of incoherent phrases, disjointed words, flashes of rage, insight, humor and innocence. she dons a variety of homemade masks in rapid succession, taking on a new persona with each.

Went moves on to her stockpile of props, stroking rubber body parts, pummeling polystyrene foam boxes, stabbing giant papier-mache eyeballs until they split and disgorge their contents. It's like Christmas morning at the morgue as viscous fluids seep out to cover Went's face and body.

By the end of the show Went is babbling, crawling through a sea of rubble. It's an exhausting experience for the audience and the performers.

When Went began putting on her shows in Seattle in the late '70s, she had never heard of performance art. Since her first L.A. shows at the Hong Kong Cafe in 1979, she has consciously worked to bridge the gap between the art galleries and rock clubs. She has opened for bands at the Whisky and the Starwood, as well as playing contemporary art venues like Beyond Baroque and LACE Gallery. Even now, with an established track record in local clubs, she says she is unaccepted by the L.A. art world.

"I'm sort of illegitimate," she says. "I don't really belong anywhere. I feel more a part of the rock 'n' roll community than the art world. I don't intellectualize and I'm not educated in the same way. I never went to college or art school and I don't speak their jargon."

While local rock audiences have accepted Went on one level, the reaction to her shows is varied.

"People always expect something but what they get is always different from their expectations," she says. "Opinions range from 'really funny' to 'really violent' to 'really gross.' "

She has released a single—"Slave Beyond the Grave" —on San Diego industrial-music master Boyd Rice's Graybeat label. The single has sold well in local stores but the group's plans center on a video project. As always, scarcity of funds is a problem—that's part of the reason Went limits herself to doing only a few shows a month. Since most of her props are destroyed on stage, each performance demands an endless search for found ob jects and cheap materials to be used in the construction of masks, dolls and other elements of her personal totem.

Went says she doesn't mind that her art is regularly destroyed. She believes in using things up. "What else would I do with it?" she asks. "Put it in storage?"

□

THEY GOT THE BOMP: After several years of planning, L.A.-based Bomp Records has just opened its first international office in London. Label head Greg Shaw says the move should give Bomp—a pioneering force in independent record marketing—increased visibility and involvement in the independent label scene in England.

AMERICAN HEROES
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 1981
DuBROW
SATURDAY NOVEMBER 7, 1981
DOUG WESTON'S World Famous
Troubadour
COCKTAILS · DINNERS · HOOT MONDAYS · NO AGE LIMIT
9081 SANTA MONICA BLVD., L.A. 276-6168

THE COMEDY STORE
A CONTINUOUS SHOW OF COMEDIANS
8433 SUNSET BLVD.
★ MAINROOM
★ ORIGINAL ROOM
★ BELLY ROOM (Comediennes)
1621 WESTWOOD BLVD.
916 PEARL ST., La Jolla
656-6225
IN THE MAIN ROOM:
THE BEST OF THE COMEDY STORE • FRI.-SAT., 10:00
COMEDIENNES...COMEDIENNES..., THURS., 9:00
THE COMEDY STORE PLAYERS • MON.-TUES., 8:00

MADAME WONG'S
CHINATOWN 624-5346—972-9570 (I.D. REQUIRED) WEST 829-7361
18 & OVER 18 & OVER
WED. 4: ANXIETY SOCIETY, RIK L. RIK, BIG JERKS / WOLFGANG ELECTRA BON MOT
THUR. 5: BLACK SHEEP, LOCAL AUTHORITY, COMBONATION / THE TWISTERS L.A. DREAMERS
FRI. 6: THE BRAINIACS, SHEIKS OF SHAKE / NAUGHTY SWEETIES CARL STEWART
SAT. 7: SHEIKS OF SHAKE, THE BRAINIACS / NAUGHTY SWEETIES BILLY SHEETS' UNDERCOVER
COMING ATTRACTIONS
NOV. 13 & 14 ROACH & THE WHITEBOYS
NOV. 20 & 21 THE UNKNOWNS
NOV. 13 & 14 SMILE
NOV. 20 & 21 CODE BLUE

Complete Dinner & 1 Show $10.50
EXCITING FLAMENCO SHOW!
EXCELLENT BANQUET FACILITIES
AWARD WINNING CUISINE
—Cocktails—
4212 Sunset Blvd.
Reservations 668-0318
EL CID NIGHT CLUB

MALE EXOTIC DANCE SHOW
EVERY WEDNESDAY, FRIDAY & SATURDAY
FEMALE MUD WRESTLING
EVERY TUESDAY AND THURSDAY
SHOWTIME WEDNESDAY at 9:00 p.m. FRIDAY & SATURDAY at 8:00 p.m.
Osko's DISCOTHEQUE
FREE BEFORE EIGHT! CALL 652-9333
531 333 S. LA CIENEGA, BEVERLY HILLS (213) 655-1021

SUNSHINE'S
MUSIC & SPIRITS CO.
PRESENTS
ALL MALE REVUE
GORGEOUS
MALE DANCERS
& M.C. LARRY TAYLOR
MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS NOW FOR:
• Dinner—Reservations Required
Includes preferred seating. Deposit required.
• Show only—Reservations not required
• Showtime 8:30 nightly.
6 nights a week Mon. thru Sat.
Matinee • Wed. Nov. 11 • Wed. Nov. 25
$9.95 per person + tax & tip.
Lunch: 11:30-1:00 Show: 1:00-2:00
Make your reservations now for:
• Luncheons • Wedding Reception
• Bachelorette Parties • Christmas Parties
• Birthday • Or any special event
DANCE GROUP APPEARING: "MONSTER"
YOU'LL BE BEGGIN' FOR MORE
For reservations or information call
(213) 634-6960
3321 South St. Long Beach
Corner of South St. & Downey Ave.

Copyright © 2024 Newspapers.com. All Rights Reserved.
Powered by Newspapers.com